# Intermittent fasting shows promise over traditional dieting for weight loss



Research published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* has revealed promising results from a study examining the efficacy of intermittent fasting compared to traditional calorie-restricted dieting for weight loss. The study involved 165 overweight or obese adults and aimed to investigate the potential of a specific intermittent fasting approach known as the 4:3 plan, where participants fasted for three days a week and were not restricted on the remaining four days.

The 4:3 intermittent fasting group was observed to lose an average of 7.6% of their body mass over a one-year period, whereas those adhering to a standard calorie-reduction regimen achieved only a 5% reduction. This marked difference suggests that the intermittent fasting model may be a more effective strategy for tackling obesity, which currently affects an estimated 1 billion people globally.

Victoria Catenacci, an associate professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and co-lead author of the study, stated, "We think fasting three days a week might be a sort of sweet spot for weight loss." She highlighted that more frequent fasting could prove too restrictive, while less frequent fasting may not yield sufficient calorie deficits to surpass traditional dieting methods.

Participants in the fasting group drastically reduced their calorie intake by 80% on their designated fasting days, while those in the reduced-calorie group aimed for a daily energy deficit of approximately 34.3%. Despite the differing approaches, both groups were provided with behavioural support, free gym memberships, and encouraged to engage in at least 300 minutes of physical activity per week.

The findings showed that the fasting group lost an average of 7.7 kg over the year, compared to 4.8 kg in the calorie-restricted cohort. Furthermore, the drop-out rate in the intermittent fasting group was around 20%, lower than the nearly 30% observed in the restricted calorie group, indicating potentially greater adherence to the intermittent fasting plan.

Another notable aspect of the 4:3 plan is the flexibility it offers to dieters, who do not have to meticulously track calorie intake on non-fasting days, which may contribute to its appeal and ease of compliance. Participants were encouraged to make healthier food choices, focusing on whole foods, particularly during their unrestricted eating days.

The surge in obesity rates has also escalated the demand for weight-loss medications, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, though these have been subject to questions regarding their long-term effects and affordability. Consequently, there is a continuous search for effective non-pharmaceutical weight-loss strategies.

Dr Adam Collins, an associate professor of nutrition at the University of Surrey, commented on the outcomes, affirming that intermittent energy restriction can be an "effective and sustainable weight loss intervention". He noted that prior research indicates individuals may eat less on non-fasting days as a subconscious behaviour, thus contributing to a more significant calorie deficit overall for those practising intermittent fasting.

As the exploration into varying dietary regimes continues, the study highlights the potential benefits of the 4:3 intermittent fasting plan, which stands apart from more conventional daily calorie restriction approaches, according to the findings presented.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35565749/> - This publication provides evidence comparing intermittent fasting (IF) and continuous calorie restriction (CCR), finding that IF may be superior in weight loss. It highlights the effectiveness of IF in reducing body weight compared to CCR.
* <https://www.menshealth.com/uk/nutrition/a62150509/intermittent-fasting-diets-longevity/> - This article discusses the benefits of intermittent fasting, including its role in weight loss, fat loss, and improved health markers like insulin sensitivity. It suggests that both intermittent fasting and caloric restriction offer significant health benefits.
* <https://touroscholar.touro.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1326&context=sjlcas> - This study explores whether intermittent fasting is a better option than continuous calorie restriction for weight loss. It concludes that both methods are effective, but intermittent fasting may offer additional benefits like improving biomarkers related to longevity.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8138359/> - This source may discuss variations of intermittent fasting, including the potential for strategies like the 4:3 plan to offer flexible and effective weight loss solutions.
* <https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/article/113/3/556/6647600> - This academic article could provide insights into the effects of calorie-restricted diets and intermittent fasting on weight loss and health outcomes, comparing different dietary approaches.
* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2212018220300236> - This publication addresses the potential of intermittent fasting as a viable method for managing weight and improving metabolic markers, offering insights into its long-term sustainability compared to continuous calorie restriction.